Oil Giants Vying for Shale Reserves

By Drew Pearson

The late Harold Ickes, who used to fight like a wildcat as Secretary of the Interior to prevent the private exploitation of natural resources, would have squirmed had he listened the other day to a successor testifying before the Senate Interior Committee.

Pearson

Stewart Udall, the current Interior Secretary, couldn't have pleased the big oil companies more as he urged the leasing, to private operators, of the most important undeveloped oil resource in the United States.

This is the vast, five-million acre bed of Government-owned oil shale land of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, containing more than an estimated trillion barrels of oil. It's now reserved for the U.S. Navy, but the major petroleum companies want to get their hands on it and produce oil from the shale by the "in situ" (underground burning process, perhaps with nuclear energy.

Udall went out of his way to endorse this general plan, telling the Senate Committee that his "objective is to get the broadest kind of industrial participation, either through a number of individual companies or through joint ventures."

He added that we "must prevent speculation and windfall profits" though he didn't specify how this could be stopped.

As Udall finished, Sen. Gordon Allott (R-Colo.), a staunch friend of the oil industry, referred to legislation he had sponsored requiring the Government to turn over the land, adding that "a columnist" had criticized him in the last compaign for advocating a "giveaway."

"I'm so happy you came here today and made an honest man out of me," Allott gushed to the Secretary.

Udall nodded a little dubiously, then commented: "The more public discussion we have on controversial problems, the better."

Note — The shale oil reserves are estimated to be worth $300 billion, or the equivalent or around $1500 each for every American citizen.

Powell Was a Hero

Rep. John Conyers, (D-Mich.,) only Negro on the Powell investigating committee, told his colleagues in closed session:

"Adam Powell has been my hero since my earliest memory of politics. Nobody was more disillusioned than I over the wrongdoing that has been mentioned in the press and further documented here.

"I can't tell you how difficult it has been for me, as a Negro, to listen to all this testimony and sit in judgment, because of the attitude of some segments of the Negro community on the matter. But I have a duty to perform and I am doing it to the best of my ability and conscience."

He voted to discipline Powell.

Thwarted Investigation

Three years ago Rep. Wright Patman of Texarkana, Tex., did his best to get to the bottom of the CIA-tax exempt foundations mystery but was thwarted by uncooperative bureaucrats.

This week the same Wright Patman faces another move to curb him, this time from inside his own Banking and Currency Committee.

Rep. Lud Ashley, Toledo Democrat, and friend of the big bankers, will try once again to hamstring Patman's power to investigate big banking chains. Last month Ashley tried to block Patman's power to investigate. Now he wants to fire some of Patman's investigative staff.

Ashley's passionate and determined interest in banking is fairly new, and mystifies some of his colleagues. It may result, however, from the fact that the Toledo Trust Company, largest bank in Ashley's district, holds in its trust department the biggest percentage of its own shares of any major bank in the United States—46.39 per cent.

The Cleveland Trust Co. holds 33.75 per cent of its own shares the 53rd Union Trust Co. of Cincinnati holds 16.68 per cent of its own shares; and the Ohio Citizens Trust Co. of Toledo holds 12.01 per cent.

Patman has claimed this situation is a potential for management conflict of interest, self dealing, and self perpetuation in the handling of trust account investments. He wants to investigate further.

In his move against Patman, Ashley has had support from all the Republican members of the Banking and Currency Committee, plus Democrats Bill Moorhead (Pa.,) Tom Gettys, (S.C.), Robert Stephens, (Ga.,) and Tom Bevill, (Ala.)

People-to-People TV

American diplomats have renewed their overtures to the Soviet Government for an exchange of television interviews of Soviet and American leaders.

In London recently Premier Kosygin held a news conference before 1000 newspapermen, carried by Communications Satellite to perhaps 500 million people in Western Europe and North America.

American diplomats are now urging the Soviet to permit the televising of an LBJ press conference to be seen via Communications Satellite in the Soviet Union.

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